
FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

NATURE OF WORK

Serves the public with technical work of some variety in the operation of various outreach and service within the Head Start Division, which targets the low-income, disadvantaged population with children under the age of 5. Work includes working with the families of Head Start children in enrollment, conducting on-going consultations to inform clients of services/resources available in the community. Develops an open and trusting relationship with all Head Start families to assist in reaching outcomes leading to self-sufficiency. Refers, advocates, and follows-up service in collaboration with appropriate Head Start staff. Assists with public awareness and recruitment activities for the Head Start Program.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Work involves responsibility for performing a variety of intake, case management, forms processing, assessment, referral, counseling, outreach, research, public information, advocacy and other tasks. Work is characterized by considerable contact with clients, other public agencies, community organizations, and the public. Work is performed independently within a structured framework of applicable policies, procedures, rules, and regulations related to the area of assignment.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS *(These essential duties are only illustrative.)*

Performs intake interviews; determines eligibility for program participation by applying program eligibility requirements and standards; makes inspections to verify information, as required.

Recruits and screens program participants.

Prepares basic memorandums and reports; performs basic calculations; may participate or assist supervisors in evaluation of programs.

Attends meetings and conferences; assesses citizen attitudes; provides public information relative to program activities in response to citizen inquiries; meets with community and organization representatives, as necessary.

May serve as technical resource person to a community group or related organization.

Ensures the development and completion of Family Assessments and Partnership Agreements that address the family's social service needs.

Consults and collaborates with supervisors, coordinators, and other service area staff to ensure timely screening processing and tracking family and child information such as health records, consents for screening and evaluation, enrollment requirements, attendance and other documentation as required.

Maintains accurate, up to date documentation of all contacts and information about families and children reflecting appropriate case management activities, particularly related to referral and advocacy. Follows-up on appropriate forms and ensures their confidentiality.

Collaborates and responds to Site Manager to ensure smooth site operations and teamwork.

Relates program philosophy, activities, training and goals to families ensuring they are fully integrated into each Head Start Site.

Maintains a working knowledge, establish linkages and develops contacts with appropriate community agencies and resources; informs families of available services as needed.

Maintains family, child and staff confidentiality and follows procedure for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, mental health concern, etc.

Transports families to and from other referral services in the community as necessary.

Participates in, and implements information received during, orientation, training, annual program reviews and meetings as required by supervisor.

Demonstrates the ability and initiative to identify potential problems and their solutions and inform Site Manager.

Prepares reports as required regarding, but not limited to, family's progress, recruitment and enrollment.

Maintains records of family contacts.

Assists with the development and implementation of parent events, training activities, and parent support groups.

Assists with classroom coverage and bus monitoring as needed to meet program requirements and mandates.

Assists with recruitment and enrollment of Head Start eligible children including application, eligibility and identification of special problems.

Assists in organizing and facilitating community outreach and public relations activities.

Assists in identifying and obtaining in-kind contributions.

Adheres to all mandates of local, regional, State and Federal regulations, as well as, Department and Head Start policies and procedures.

Develops partnership relationships with parents in the Head Start program, encouraging each parent/family to take an active role in the child's educational experiences and to set and meet their own goals for self sufficiency.

Maintains reasonable and predictable attendance.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the general supervision of the Site Manager, who allows some latitude and independence in carrying out tasks and assignments to completion. Work is reviewed occasionally for timely accomplishments of tasks, for overall results achieved, and the degree to which the work meets the needs of the client served by the Family and Community Partnership Manager.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Supervision is not a responsibility of positions of this class, although functional direction may be exercised over other program or support staff in connection with various activities of the program. Employees may provide training in operational procedures, orient new employees, or assist in resolving unusual or difficult problems.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Work is performed in an office setting and in the field, and involves traveling throughout the city, and Winnebago and Boone counties. Work activities may also involve attending meetings and conferences, and training that involves out-of-town travel.

SUCCESS FACTORS

Knowledge of organizational systems.

Knowledge of laws, codes, ordinances, procedures, rules, regulations, and guidelines pertaining to the Head Start program.

Knowledge of the mission, objectives, and available resources relative to the Head Start program.

Knowledge of community agencies and services that can be used as referrals.

Ability to interpret and explain program information to others and to follow procedures and regulations.

Ability to complete and process forms, checklists, and reports accurately.

Ability to maintain required records and files.

Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing.

Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with coworkers, clients, and community organizations.

Skill in the operation of a personal computer.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

The completion of an Associate's Degree in Human Services, Social Services or a related field and two years experience in work related to the area of assignment. Any satisfactory equivalent combination of experience and training which ensures the ability to perform the work may be substituted for the required experience.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid IL Driver's License.

Must meet Illinois DCFS licensing standards.

Residency requirement: Classified employees hired after January 1, 1984 may live anywhere in Winnebago County or anywhere within an area fifteen (15) miles from the Public Safety Building within six (6) months of their date of completion of probation. Employees hired prior to January 1, 1984 shall be subject to their conditions of employment in effect at that time.